DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 436 487 SP 038 875

AUTHOR	Weiss, Eileen Mary; Weiss, Stephen Gary
TITLE	Beginning Teacher Induction. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-SP-1999-3
PUB DATE	1999-11-00
NOTE	4p.
CONTRACT	ED-99-CO-0007
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: <http://www.ericsp.org>.
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071) -- ERIC Digests in Full Text (073)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Beginning Teacher Induction; *Beginning Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Labor Turnover; Mentors; Professional Development Schools; Public Schools; Teacher Collaboration; Teaching Skills; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

New U.S. teachers are challenged to educate diverse learners in an increasingly complex knowledge-based, technology-oriented society. Often, new teachers receive little support from colleagues or professional development. Many low-wealth urban districts with acute shortages are turning toward beginning teacher induction programs to keep new teachers from leaving. Research documents the value of teacher induction programs and describes multiple prototypes for implementation. Benefits include reduced attrition rates among new teachers and improved teaching capabilities. The number of state and local districts that have created programs for beginning teachers has grown substantially since the early 1980s, though programs and funding levels vary strikingly among states. Program structure and the underlying conceptualization of teaching differ among districts. Induction programs increasingly provide assistance to new teachers by assigning them to mentors. Successful mentor programs depend upon the quality of training afforded the mentors. There is limited agreement about what new teachers should know and be able to do. A consensus is growing about beginning teachers needing to meet standards for practice that will attest to their grasp of essential skills, knowledge, and dispositions. Many school systems work with colleges to create learner-centered environments such as Professional Development Schools. This model of teacher induction has the potential to influence both members of the mentoring relationship. (Contains 20 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
1307 New York Ave., NW • Suite 300 • Washington, DC 20005-4701
(202) 293-2450 • (800) 822-9229 • http://www.ericsp.org

DIGEST

November 1999

EDO-SP-1999-3

Beginning Teacher Induction

Eileen Mary Weiss and Stephen Gary Weiss

ED 436 487

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP038875

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
1307 New York Ave., NW • Suite 300 • Washington, DC 20005-4701
(202) 293-2450 • (800) 822-9229 • http://www.ericsp.org

DIGEST

November 1999

EDO-SP-1999-3

Beginning Teacher Induction

Eileen Mary Weiss and Stephen Gary Weiss

Over two million new K-12 teachers will be employed in the U.S. over the next decade due to increased student enrollments, reductions in class size, and accelerating retirements among an aging teacher population (Darling-Hammond, 1997). More than one-third of these new teachers will be hired in low wealth urban and rural school districts, and the majority of these in center city public schools with minority student enrollments of at least 20% (Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1999). This large population of new teachers will be challenged to educate diverse learners in an increasingly complex knowledge-based, technology-oriented society.

Unfortunately, first-year teachers are frequently left in a "sink or swim" position with little support from colleagues and few opportunities for professional development (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). Well-organized induction programs are the exception rather than the rule, and informal, haphazard induction experiences have been associated with higher levels of attrition as well as lower levels of teacher effectiveness (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Current estimates are that more than 20% of public school teachers leave their positions within three years and 9.3% quit before finishing their first year (Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1999).

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1999) reports that a growing number of low wealth urban districts with acute shortages are turning toward induction programs to keep new teachers from leaving. Urban districts reported a 93% retention rate for teachers who participated in such programs. Despite the positive impact of induction programs on retention rates, there has been little sustained commitment in recent years to permanently institute teacher induction programs as part of a formal entry process into the field (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996).

Teacher Induction Programs: Current Design

Numerous studies document the value of teacher induction programs and describe multiple prototypes for implementation. The benefits of the programs include not only reduced attrition rates among new teachers, but also improved teaching capabilities. The availability of formal induction programs and their structures vary among states and local school districts.

The number of state and local school districts that have created programs for beginning teachers has grown substantially since the early 1980s, but the nature of those programs vary by state and district (Sclan and Darling-Hammond, 1992). According to NASDTEC data, in 1984 only eight states reported initiating, approving or implementing teacher induction programs; that number rose to 31 states in 1991 (Gold, 1996) but currently stands at 26 states and the District of Columbia (Andrews & Andrews, 1998). Many states eliminated programs due to reduced or restricted funding.

Within the states that have created programs for beginning teachers, local school districts are not always required to offer the programs, nor are all teachers required to participate. In 1998-99, local district participation was discretionary in eight states and beginning teacher attendance was voluntary in five states. In New Jersey participation was discretionary for districts, but all beginning teachers were required to participate in the districts where programs were offered. In Washington, participation is voluntary for districts, and those districts offering programs can decide if all teachers are required to participate. New Hampshire and California induction programs currently reach only 30% of their beginning teachers. However, California reports plans to phase in beginning teacher support for all new teachers (Andrews & Andrews, 1998). Nationally, 55% of public school teachers with less than five years of teaching recently reported having participated in some kind of formal induction program (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Funding levels also vary strikingly among states, from $17.5 million in California to $20,000 in Mississippi and New Hampshire. Washington state's funding pattern is subject to change with each legislative session (Andrews & Andrews, 1998). In states where induction program design was left to the localities, little support was given to the programs and fewer teachers had access to them (Hirsch, et al., 1998).

The structure of teacher induction programs and their underlying conceptualization of teaching differ among districts. Some induction programs are based upon "effective teaching" criteria relating to direct instruction for mastering skills and academic content as measured by students' achievement on standardized tests. Other programs underscore the complexities of teaching and the need for dynamic, regenerative school environments that rely on a broad base of knowledge to inform teachers' behavior (Weiss & Weiss, 1998). States such as Connecticut, California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Vermont as well as National Education Association and American Federation of Teacher local chapters in districts such as Toledo, Cincinnati, Columbus, Rochester, and Seattle (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996) have adopted "constructivist" approaches that expect teachers to practice reflective and collaborative action, which engender a wide repertoire of techniques to respond to student needs (Sclan & Darling-Hammond, 1992).

Since the mid-1980s, induction programs have increasingly provided assistance to new teachers by assigning them to mentors: veteran teachers help beginners learn the philosophy, cultural values and established sets of behaviors expected by the schools where they are employed (Little, 1990; Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1999). Some new teachers receive regular coaching and opportunities for collaboration, while others see their mentors sporadically. In the California New Teacher Project, the "intensity of the support and instruction...did differ across projects and had an impact on new teachers' perceptions of teaching and their performance in the classroom" (Gold, 1996). Not only the frequency, but the quality of support is important for beginning teacher success; less than one-quarter of the programs (6 of the 27) reported some kind of training for the support team in 1998. North Carolina is the only state that requires mentor teachers to hold a mentor license (Andrews & Andrews, 1998).

Successful mentor programs are dependent upon the quality of training afforded the mentors (Feiman-Nemser,

SP033415

1996; Ganser, 1996; Ganser & Koskela, 1997). Research indicates that beginning teachers who are mentored are more effective teachers in their early years, since they learn from guided practice rather than depending upon trial-and-error alone. Mentored novice teachers tend to focus on student learning sooner and leave teaching at a lower rate (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

Teacher Induction Programs: Future Development

There has been limited agreement in the profession about what new teachers should know and be able to do and what constitutes the best learning environments; it is no wonder that induction programs are divergent. A consensus slowly is emerging about beginning teachers needing to meet standards for practice that will attest to their grasp of essential skills, knowledge and dispositions (INTASC, 1992; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996). Performance-based licensing standards for new teachers, informed by research and tested in practice, have been developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Consortium (INTASC, 1992). The INTASC standards provide an overall framework for documenting accomplishments across the domains of teaching and may be useful for communicating expectations for new teachers' behavior, structuring induction experiences, and evaluating professional development.

A growing number of school systems are working with colleges to create learner-centered environments, such as Professional Development Schools (PDSs), in which reflective practice and teacher decision-making are part of a school culture where new teachers are naturally expected to collaborate with more experienced university- and school-based colleagues (Levine & Trachtman, 1997). The PDS movement has led to an attitudinal shift away from the concept of mentor as veteran whose unidirectional role is to impart basic knowledge to an unknowing novice, towards that of an experienced co-worker who, in a relationship of mutuality with new colleagues, offers assistance and also learns from the experience. The former concept implicitly stresses the differences and distances between trainer and trainee; the latter concept accentuates the connectedness among teachers even at different career stages. In a collaborative culture, new and experienced teachers who communicate ideas and work together on real problems put their collective knowledge base into action and experience the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice. This model of teacher induction has the potential to influence both members of the mentoring relationship: the veteran also may learn from the novice. New teachers who spend their first year in collaborative school environments are likely to have higher morale, be more committed to teaching, and plan to remain in the profession (Weiss, in press).

Conclusions

New teachers, who have an inordinate rate of attrition and are assigned to the neediest students in schools with the least resources, will comprise the large majority of the teaching force within the next decade. Although shown to be valuable, induction programs that include sustained feedback in collaborative environments remain a rare experience for most beginning teachers. Thus far, teacher induction has been a variegated landscape of policies and programs.

References

Andrews, T. E., & Andrews, L. (Eds.) (1998). The NASDTEC Manual 1998-1999: Manual on the Preparation and Certification of Educational Personnel. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching. New York: National Commission on Teaching & America's Future.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Sclan, E. M. (1996). Who teaches and why: Dilemmas of building a profession for twenty-first century schools. In Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, second edition, J. Sikula, T. J. Buttery, & E. Guyton (Eds.), pp. 67-101. New York: Macmillan.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (1996). Teacher mentoring: A critical review. Washington, DC: ERIC DIGEST. ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, AACTE.

Ganser, T. (1996). Mentor roles: Views of participants in a state-mandated program. Mid-Western Educational Researcher, 9, (2), pp. 15-20.

Ganser, T., & Koskela, R. (1997). A comparison of six Wisconsin mentoring programs for beginning teachers. NASSP Bulletin, (81), 591, pp. 71-80.

Gold, Y. (1996). Beginning teacher support: Attrition, mentoring, and induction. In C. B. Courtney (Ed.) Review of Research in Education, 16, pp. 548-594. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Heck, R., & Wolcott, L. P. (1997). Beginning teachers: A statewide study of factors explaining successful completion of the probationary period. Educational Policy, (11), 1, p. 111-133.

Hirsch, E., Koppich, J. E., & Knapp, M. S. (1998). What states are doing to improve the quality of teaching: A brief review of current patterns and trends. A CTP Working Paper. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) (1992). Model standards for beginning teacher licensing and development: A resource for state dialogue. Washington, DC: Council for Chief State School Officers.

Levine, M. & Trachtman, R., eds. (1997). Making Professional Development Schools Work: Politics, Practice, and Policy. New York: Teachers College Press.

Little, J. W. (1990). The mentor phenomenon and the social organization of teaching. In C. B. Courtney (Ed.) Review of Research in Education, 16, pp. 297-35. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996). What matters most: Teaching for America's Future. New York: Author, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Perez, K., Swain, C., & Hartsough, C. S. (1997). An analysis of practices used to support new teachers. Teacher Education Quarterly, Spring, pp. 41-52.

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1999). Learning the ropes: Urban teacher induction programs and practices in the United States. Belmont, MA.

Robinson, G. W. (1998). New teacher induction: A study of selected new teacher induction models and common practices. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Sclan, E. M., & Darling-Hammond, L. (1992). Beginning teacher performance evaluation: An overview of state policies. Trends and Issues paper no. 7. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education; American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Weiss, E. M. (in press) Perceived workplace conditions and first-year teachers' morale, commitment, and planned retention: A Secondary Analysis. Journal of Teaching and Teacher Education.

Weiss, E.M., & Weiss, S.G. (1998). New directions in teacher evaluation. Washington, DC: ERIC DIGEST, ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, AACTE.

Wise, A., Darling-Hammond, L., and Berry, B. (1987). Effective Teacher Selection: From Recruitment to Retention. Santa Monica CA: RAND.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education

1-800-822-9229 http://www.ericsp.org query@aacte.org

Mary E. Dilworth, Director

Deborah Newby, Associate Director

Eileen Mary Weiss, Long Island University/C.W. Post, and Stephen Gary Weiss, New York University (Authors)

This Digest is in the public domain and may be reproduced.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvment, under contract number ED-99-CO-0007. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of or policies of the U. S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U. S. Government.